

THE QUIVER

Saturday, January 8, 1870.



"I will not go."—p. 212.

IN DUTY BOUND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN," "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "A BRAVE LIFE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—EVERYTHING GONE.

"WHY, Jane, you have made us look the picture of polish—cleanliness. "I declare I feel at home of comfort. It is the old time come back already."

"I am sure, Master Horace—excuse me calling you so, sir, it comes so natural—I am sure there's

nothing I wouldn't do to oblige you, sir, if it was only because I've known you ever since you were that high; and if Mrs. Vincent will make herself contented—I'm not used to lady lodgers," added the good woman, bridling a little.

"Oh! but I am sure Ruth—"

He paused. What was he going to say—that Ruth would give her no trouble?

He was not certain of that in his heart. At any rate, Ruth was sadly out of temper. She had not spoken to him, except to say yes or no, for a fortnight.

His home was very wretched. He had no clinging to it, as might have been supposed. Waste, disorder, and neglect—the three, like weird sisters, were running him down!

He was sure that he had done right in the step which he had taken. And he did not care for the attitude his wife had chosen to assume. Her interests were bound up with his, whether she knew it or not; and he must rescue both.

His hopes revived, as he looked round this peaceful haven. Here order, and industry, and cleanliness had their abode. In the hands of his old and faithful servant his affairs would begin to mend. At any rate, the reign of destruction would be stayed.

He walked home briskly. He had decided to remove the next day. Ruth had been warned of this, but he could not perceive that she had taken any steps. The few articles which he intended to take with him he had packed himself. In fact, every scrap of business, in doors and out, was his province. He had made all the arrangements. Ruth sat by her fireside and read her novels without the least concern.

It was the last evening in the house, which should have been so blessed. Horace was anxious to come to some understanding with his wife—to patch up some kind of reconciliation; to live with her on these unhappy terms, under another's roof, seemed to him simply disgraceful. Besides, he yearned for peace. His tastes were all domestic and homelike. He seemed, so to speak, to hover round the altar, even when the household gods had departed!

Ruth was sitting as usual with her book. That persistent and frivolous reading had become to him intolerable. Yet what else would she do? There was a strange vacuum, and nothing to fill it.

He was in one of his kindest humours. There was an amount of benevolent forbearance in his nature, which could not easily be exhausted. He would still love and cherish her—this foolish woman—if she would let him.

"So, Ruth, we are going to-morrow. I am sure the little wife will like her new home."

Ruth gave an impatient push with her elbow. She was sitting at the table, reading. Her obstinate and unfriendly attitude acted like a chill.

He said, gravely, "I am sorry that you fail to look at the matter from the right point of view;—

that you ignore the fact of my being driven to take the step, not so much from choice as from necessity."

"There is no necessity about it," she said, rudely; "only I wish I had known."

"Known what, Ruth?" He spoke hastily and sharply. "Known what?"

"Known how miserable I should be; and that instead of getting a nice home, I should have to go into lodgings."

"And if you had known, Ruth, what then?" he felt impelled to ask.

"Of course, I should have minded better," replied she, insolently; "I should never have had such a come-down as this!"

He was pale to his lips with just indignation. A minute after, he said, quietly and temperately, for he was struggling to gain the mastery over himself, "Ruth, it seems we are not to understand each other; but at least we might avoid rude speeches, and an open breach of the restraints which good manners impose upon us. I shall require this of you, if I am to meet with disappointment elsewhere."

"I shall always say what I think," replied she, rudely.

He did not answer her. Nor did he seek refuge, as before, in solitude. The days were gone by, when he might have used this feint as a device to win her back to him.

No; he had chosen his own destiny; himself forged his own chains. He must abide by the consequences. He would not be driven from his fireside by her evil humours. He would go his own way—follow his own employments. Be kind to her if she would; if not, he would let her alone.

A strange chill of indifference was creeping over him. Was it creeping over her as well?

He had a great deal to attend to, that night—the eve of his removal. In the morning, he said to Ruth, as he went out, "We dine in our new lodgings, Ruth. I shall bring a cab for you. Is your luggage ready?"

He did not speak, but he saw a tear trickling down her cheek. He was by her side in a moment.

His kind heart softened. He was so ready to catch at the slightest symptom of repentance and amendment.

She turned away from him; but she was crying. He saw that plainly, and he would not urge her too strongly.

She was sorry, no doubt, for the past. Her ill-temper and perverseness, very likely, lay only on the surface. He was not going to remember against her anything she might have said or done in perverseness or ill-humour. It was a vexation, no doubt, to her to leave her bridal home.

Poor Ruth! and he fell back upon the softening recollection of her youth, and inexperience, and all the rest of the excuses he was wont to frame, and which staved off the extremity of the ill.

He left her weeping; but he felt there was a hope for him born of those tears. He would renew the attempt to make her happy. No matter how incompatible in disposition she might be, her claim upon him was unshaken. He would love and cherish her, let the mistake have been what it might.

The morning passed away quickly. It had been arranged that he should instal Ruth in her new home, dine with her, and return to wind up matters finally. He ordered a cab, at the time appointed, and rode down in it to his house. He hoped Ruth would be ready. On the strength of those tears he fancied she would not give him any further annoyance; and he was prepared to meet her without a single reminder of the past.

He went into the house. It was in strange confusion. Some kind of packing had evidently taken place. Up-stairs, his wife's chest of drawers was empty. The door of the wardrobe, where her dresses used to hang, was open. Everything was gone!

"Ruth! where are you? I am ready," he said, speaking loud; for he thought she could not be far distant.

But no Ruth answered. He sought her everywhere, but in vain.

All at once his eye fell on a note which lay on the dressing-table, and was directed to him. He opened it—it was from his wife!

Horace—I don't mean to be driven into lodgings, so you may go by yourself. My friend Mrs. Mudford, whom you treat so ill, has taken me in. I am going to live with her, which I shall like a great deal better.

RUTH VINCENT.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"WHERE IS MRS. VINCENT?"

WHAT! have his domestic sorrows made the talk of the town? Have this secret chamber, where the skeleton had its abode, and which he would sacredly refuse ever to reveal—have it thrown wide open! and by the egregious folly of the woman who was his wife!

Fancy her pouring out her griefs in the ears of a Mrs. Mudford! Fancy the fabulous grievances, the insane exaggerations, the misrepresentations, the train of ills, which would follow on this disastrous step!

He was thankful for one thing! The step had been recently taken. There was scarcely time for the affair to take root, even in the fertile soil of East Bramley. He would follow her quickly. He would insist on her return at once—that very moment!

Even in his excitement—and the man was stung almost to frenzy—he did not forget what was due to her. He let no word escape him which reflected on her conduct. He told the servant, quite in an indifferent tone, that he was going to call for his wife at Mrs. Mudford's.

And thither, in the same dispassionate tone, he directed the man to drive. When he was inside the

cab he wrung his hands in very agony, as he thought of her folly.

The cab soon reached its destination. It had but to go across the market-place. Then Horace sprang out, and rang and knocked at the door.

The cabman was desired to wait, in the event of his bringing Ruth back.

He was shown up-stairs into a gaudily-furnished drawing-room—the standard, in Ruth's eyes, of all that was elegant and beautiful. He glanced round it, and shuddered.

Presently Mrs. Mudford came to him. She was a large, fussy woman, with an important face and emphatic manners; but he knew what she was. He had not to begin to study her character now.

"I am not surprised to see you, Mr. Vincent," she began, "though you haven't been so ready with your visits neither, considering what near neighbours we are—"

"Madam," said Horace, quietly, though he trembled with annoyance, "my visit can have but one object. Will you have the goodness to summon Mrs. Vincent?"

"Ah, poor thing!" and Mrs. Mudford assumed an air of compassion that was intensely provoking; "she's got a sad handful! At her time of life, too, when she ought to be the gayest of the gay!"

"I do not know, madam, to what your remarks tend," he said, scarcely able to restrain his indignation; "but, at least, you will allow my request to be a reasonable one. I wish to take home my wife."

"Home, indeed! Ah, poor thing! she little thought what she was coming to—to be driven from her nice house, and put under a servant!"

This, then, was Ruth's version. He stood aghast at its want of veracity; but he was not going to plead his cause with Mrs. Mudford. Heaven forbid!

"Shall I ring the bell, madam? Will you allow me to see my wife?"

"Oh, yes; you may see her. Poor thing! you will find it hard to take her from me."

Horace made no reply to this. He stood looking very stern and very angry.

In a few minutes the door opened, and in came Ruth.

She had her bonnet off and her hair smoothed, as though she had come intending to stay. Her face had its old obstinate expression, intensified to the last degree.

"Ruth," said the calm voice of Horace, friendly, even now, "I cannot believe for a moment that you will refuse to return with me—to your home, Ruth, and your husband."

"You hear what he says, Ruth, my dear," said Mrs. Mudford, "do just as you like; don't let me persuade you. They might say it was because I took your part. Of course, I know."

"Come, Ruth," said Horace, ignoring the very existence of Mrs. Mudford, and eager to rescue his

wife ere mischief could be inflicted. "Come, my love;" and he would have taken her by the hand.

Ruth moved back a pace or two.

"No," said she, resolutely, "I will not come, unless you will stay in the house."

"Poor dear, it is but reasonable," murmured Mrs. Mudford.

"But that is impossible, Ruth; I have let the house," replied Horace, scarcely believing she could be so void of understanding. "The tenant enters upon it to-morrow."

"I do not care; I will not go."

What should he do? The larger woman—perhaps the greater simpleton of the two—was evidently prepared for a scene. She was one of those persons who delight in it; and she owed Horace a grudge, for being, as she expressed it, so "stuck up." He had no wish to gratify her; besides, he could not believe that Ruth, in cool blood, would persist in remaining away from him, or that the master of the house, whatever might be the incredible folly of its mistress, would allow such a state of things to be. His most dignified course, and the course most adapted to calm the present irritation, was to go quietly away. Ruth would be sure to follow. Affection, duty, all those womanly perceptions of right and wrong, from which he still sought to hope something, would plead with her. She would follow him, and this disgraceful business be ended.

Telling her he should expect her shortly, and with a slight bow to Mrs. Mudford, whom he felt he could not tolerate much longer, he went down-stairs.

"Is the lady a-coming?" asked the cabman, as he opened the door of his vehicle.

"She is not quite ready," replied Horace, promptly, and getting into the cab.

How many more excuses would he have to make for her that day?

Jane Wilson was standing at her door, looking up and down the street.

"Well, to be sure, and I did think you late," said she, as the cab stopped. "I began to be afraid the dinner would be spoilt. Why, where is Mrs. Vincent?" This was said as she looked into the cab, anxious to get sight of her young master's wife.

"Mrs. Vincent will be here soon, I hope," said Horace, in a tone as free from anxiety as he could make it. "We have brought you some luggage, you see, Jane."

"Oh, never mind, sir, don't you trouble; me and the cabman will see to that. Well, to be sure, I am disappointed not to see Mrs. Vincent."

Horace did not make any further remark on the subject. He stepped into the little sitting-room, where the cloth was laid for dinner.

Jane very soon bustled after him. She seemed possessed with but one idea.

"You see, sir, I have done all I could to make the lady comfortable. That little table will be nice and

handy for her to sit and work at by the window; and I've shifted my few plants from the other room, to make the place look cheerful. Is she fond of flowers, sir?"

"Yes, I think she is," stammered Horace.

"And, up-stairs, if you like to look, I have done the best I could. But, dear, how I am chattering! The meat will be roasted to rags. Shall you wait for Mrs. Vincent, sir?"

"I think I had better not, Jane. She may not be here just yet," he added, by way of postponing the subject.

"Ah; I dare say you are all in confusion, just the last day. But I can keep some dinner hot for her when she comes," continued the good woman, innocently. "She'll be fine and tired, poor thing."

"I think she will have had her dinner, Jane, thank you, and now I shall be glad of mine."

It was not that he cared to eat, but he would be glad of any interruption to the topic in discussion; and he wished to put a brave face upon it, and not give rise to any suspicions. He was jealously sensitive on this head.

He had his dinner, apparently with his usual appetite, and in his usual spirits. If he looked a trifle pale and haggard, the good woman set it down to the fatigue of moving.

"I can soon cheer him up," said she to herself, as she cleared away the dinner-things. "He won't be like the same in a fortnight, Heaven bless him!"

Horace grew very nervous as the tea-hour approached, and he would have to quit his office and return home.

Would Ruth be there before him? At one time he entertained the delusive hope that she would tap at his office door, and enter in tears and penitence. But though several taps came, hers was not among them.

Jane Wilson was at the door, looking up and down the street.

"Dear heart! Why you've come by yourself again," said she.

"Mrs. Vincent has not arrived then," replied Horace, as he hurried by her to hide the blank dismay visible on his face.

"No, indeed, she hasn't," continued Jane Wilson, following him. "I've been on watch all the afternoon. I sent the neighbour's little lad for the milk, because I didn't like to leave."

"At any rate, I will have my tea, Jane."

Jane gave a shrewd glance at his face. He could not altogether hide it from her. She shrugged her shoulders, and went into the kitchen.

"If there isn't a squall about, my name's not Jane Wilson," thought she.

As the evening advanced, Horace grew almost distracted. His ear was strained to catch every footstep in the street. The rattle of a cab made him start up eager and excited.

Everything depended on her return that night. If she refused, what a desperate breach might be opened. How difficult it would be to heal. What material the subject would form for idle, ill-natured tongues. He could not endure to think of it. He reached out pen and paper, and wrote:—

Ruth, my dear Ruth,—Let me entreat you to return to me at once. You know not what mischief you will create if you refuse. Be wise, be conciliatory. Remember we two are bound together for good or for evil. I pray God he may soften your heart, and induce you to return to your duty and your home.

Your anxious and distressed husband,

HORACE.

This note he folded and directed; then he went out in search of a messenger. He soon found one, and gave him the note, desiring him to place it in Mrs. Vincent's hands and to bring back an answer.

Poor Horace! The time the messenger was gone seemed to be an hour. It was getting late, but he walked up and down the pavement in front of the house, restless and unhappy, and almost in despair.

When he saw the lad coming, he hurried to meet him.

"Well?" he cried, eagerly—"well?"

"Well, sir, I see the lady, and give her the letter. And when she read it, she said, says she, 'Tell Mr. Vincent not to write no more notes. I'm going to stop where I am.'"

"And that was all?"

"Yes sir."

And the lad waited for the sixpence which Horace had promised him. Horace gave it to him, and went in doors.

"Well, I am sure! What is the matter, sir?" exclaimed Jane Wilson, now really alarmed at his appearance.

"Nothing, Jane." He still tried to speak calmly; still fought against the grievous evil that was marching full upon him. "Nothing, only that you had better lock the doors and go to bed. Mrs. Vincent will not be home to-night."

(To be continued.)

SHORT PAPERS ON SHORT TEXTS.

BY THE REV. GORDON CALTHROP, M.A., VICAR OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S, Highbury.

II.—"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

NOT a few, I suppose, of those persons who keep Christmas ever think of inquiring why the season should be one of happiness and rejoicing. It is enough for them that their fathers and grandfathers, and progenitors to the remotest generation, observed the day with feasting and jollity; and that the world at large, or at least the world to which they belong, has agreed to maintain the good old custom, and to make itself generally pleasant and sociable at Christmas-tide. Well, we will be thankful for this feeling, although it is not a very deep one. The philosophy of the comfortable has no high aim, makes no grand pretension, and certainly does not do much for the *elevation* of human life; but if it tends to bring men together, and to promote kindly sentiment, and to make them mindful of the wants of others, and to dispose them to the healing of breaches, and the forgetfulness of feuds—and I presume it does all this, for its admirers say so—we have no right to despise it. Anything that tends to add to the amount of human happiness and to take away even the smallest particle from the vast heap of human misery, should find favour in the eyes of those who profess to follow Christ.

But still, although this view of Christmas be good, a deeper view is better. And this deeper view we will attempt to take, under the guidance of our "short text." And first let us say a word or two about the text itself.

St. John, we know, wrote his Gospel many years after his brother evangelists had written theirs. And he had, in writing it, a particular purpose, which he mentions at the end of one of his later chapters. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Of course, we are not to understand by this that the doctrine of the true Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ was a novel discovery, then for the first time propounded for the acceptance of the Christian Church. That doctrine was to be found in the writings of the earlier evangelists, running like a vein of golden ore through their pages. It was embedded in the hearts of the earliest disciples. It was the fact of the union of the Godhead and the manhood in the one person of Christ, which gave value and meaning to the Saviour's work upon earth, and clothed him with that marvellous power which he exercised over the minds of men. But we are simply to understand that, at this more advanced period of the history of the Church, the time had come for a distinct and emphatic statement of the Incarnation; and that John was the man appointed to bring, as it were, to the surface, the truth which had all along been underlying the spiritual life of the followers of Christ. This task he fulfilled in his Gospel, and, perhaps, in no place more strikingly than in that passage to which our "short text" belongs. Just put your memory to the trouble of recalling the passage. He speaks of the Son of

God as "the Word," *i.e.*, the one medium of communication between God and man. I understand you, you understand me, by the *words* which we employ. And it is by and through Jesus Christ, that God becomes intelligible to us. God's utterances out of Christ are solemn and awful; but to us, inarticulate. Of this "Word," John predicates everything that we are accustomed to regard as the essential attribute of Deity. He was "in the beginning," there is eternity. He was "with God;" there is the closest and most intimate union with Deity. This intimate union existed from all eternity, for he was "with God in the beginning;" and, as if to put the matter beyond dispute, he proceeds to assert that "the Word was God." If human language is meant to convey ideas, and not to conceal them, it seems hard to imagine that such expressions as these were not intended to teach us the true, essential, indisputable Godhead of Him whom the apostle here calls "the Word." To a mind unprejudiced and unpledged to the maintenance of some theory of its own, only one interpretation of the language seems possible. Well, having laid this truth down thus distinctly, the apostle advances. "The Word was made flesh." This Being who was God, allied himself with, took upon Him, human nature. Not ceasing, of course, to be God, he became man. Mark you, not *a man*. The Son of God did not ally himself with a man called Jesus Christ; but he became Man. His person, which was that of the Son of God, clothed itself with our real humanity—with body and soul, and all that appertains to them, and thus connected itself, by innumerable ligaments and fibres, with every being that wears a human shape. This is the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is a great mystery. Our minds cannot grasp it. We can only accept and rest upon the revealed fact. But you will see at once that if it be true, it is not only the most marvellous fact that ever occurred in the history of the universe, but that it also makes human life and human destiny very different things from what they would have been without it.

Let us, then, consider one or two results, flowing from this great event, which we commemorate at Christmas.

First, because the *Word was made flesh*, we are able to look upon God as a *Father*. The ancient believers, it would seem, were under a disadvantage in this respect. Perhaps they were not altogether without acquaintance with the Fatherhood of God: but they saw the truth only by gleams and glimpses. It did not shine upon them with a steady light. And their prevalent idea was that of the greatness, and power, and supremacy of God; of his holiness, and, above all, of his being the covenant God of his people Israel. The Apostle Paul seems to indicate this when he speaks of "the spirit of bondage," to which

the ancient Church was subject, and contrasts it with the liberty and freedom which Christian disciples enjoy. In the old time, he implies, men, even good men, regarded God rather with the feelings with which servants regard a master; and there was, in consequence, a certain want of sympathy between the two contracting parties. God was to pay wages, and men were to receive them. But now all this is changed. Now that God has sent forth his Son, made of a woman, we have received the adoption of sons, and can cry "Abba, Father!" "Father, dear Father!" This is one result of the Incarnation, and a very important one. And thus the "Lord's prayer," as we call it, is characteristic of the Christian dispensation. Before Christ came, men would not have found it easy and natural to say, "Our Father." Nor is it, perhaps (you will remind me), easy and natural for us even now, after so many centuries of Christian instruction. No! it is not. It takes an education to be able to utter these two little words. Still, we may be thankful that we are permitted to say them. For just think how different the world becomes, what a different aspect is thrown around human life, when we can believe ourselves to be in the hands of a heavenly *Father*, instead of in the hands of a Being who is merely great, and wise, and powerful, and beneficent, and entertains a good feeling towards us. The belief in the Fatherhood of God makes a great difference, and for this we are indebted to the fact that "the Word was made flesh."

Secondly. *The Incarnation helps us to realise the universal brotherhood of man.* "Liberty! equality! fraternity!" was the cry of the French revolution; and has been the cry of many since. There was a truth and a meaning in the demand which these words represented. The demand was the result of a God-given instinct. But the pity was, that what God intended men to possess, was not sought for in the way that God had pointed out. In his Son were these blessings to be found. But men sneered, and said, "Priestcraft!" and went on groping and blundering to look for the crock of gold at the foot of the rainbow. And so they sneer, and so they blunder still. But, for all that, it is true that only the Christian has got hold of true fraternity. The Incarnation, rightly viewed, teaches us that all men are brothers; that all are members of a vast family, which, however diverse in externals, God meant to be one—one in spirit, in heart, in aims, in destiny—because he had gathered it up in the person of his own Incarnate Son. I think men do realise this a little at Christmas-time; but it is dimly and imperfectly. Would that all saw it, and saw it clearly! No persuasion could do what this does to soften down the asperities of life, to make men unselfish and loving, and to remove the barriers which

sometimes, unhappily, separate one class from another.

Thirdly. *The fact that the Word was made flesh throws a dignity round human occupations, and round the meanest human life.* Statesmen, warriors, great men, *may* deal with their fellow-creatures in the mass—nay, perhaps, *must* do so—without regarding individuals. But it is not so with the Christian. Each single person, to him, is not a mere unit, that goes to swell a vast number, but is precious, because he wears that humanity with which the Son of God clothed himself: because, whether he knows it or not, he is bound by strong ties to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this thought which lies at the basis of all our missionary efforts. What pains are taken, what sacrifices are made, for the recovery of one lost soul! Arms are made bare, and plunged down into the turbid filth of the gutter, to pluck up one who has recklessly and wilfully flung himself therein. Why all this trouble? Why all this anxiety? Why not let the man perish, if he chooses to perish? Because the Word was made flesh: and because that man is unspeakably precious, degraded as he is, seeing that his humanity links him with the glorious Son of God. And then, as to human life. A dignity has been thrown round the meanest lawful occupation since Christ came into the world, and “tabernacled” among us. Born in a lowly station, earning his bread, like a hard-handed mechanic, by the sweat of his brow; mixing with peasants, and mechanics, and fishermen, and agricultural labourers, as the chief associates of his earlier years: and then, during the period of his ministry, supported by the contributions of faithful and loving followers—what scorn the life of Jesus Christ pours upon the pride of man, and the conventional distinctions which are so rife

among us! More than any one else Jesus Christ has taught us that “a man’s a man for all that.” He has torn off the outside covering, and laid bare the real humanity lying beneath, and thrown a halo of glory round every honest human life. They tell a story that a Highland soldier, who had once shaken hands with Charles Edward, whom he regarded as his lawful monarch, would never after offer his right hand to any one in the way of salutation. His left hand they might have, if they liked, but not his right. He kept his right in his bosom. “It was sick,” he said; or, in truth, since it had been honoured by the grasp of his sovereign, he did not choose that it should be profaned by any meaner touch. So thinks the Christian. Human life has been honoured by the contact of the Son of God. It is now a sacred thing. It is not to be made the subject of a jest or a sneer. It is not to be undervalued, as if it were nothing in comparison of eternity: much less is it to be defiled and polluted by the touch of sin.

These are some consequences that flow from the fact that the “Word was made flesh.” But need I say that, in order to partake of the blessings which the Incarnation brings, we must believe in and accept, we must love and serve, the incarnate Son of God? Otherwise it will be no profit to us to wear humanity. “No profit!” No! But the reverse. Yet on this topic we will not dwell. We would close with a joyful strain. And we would add to our former considerations, what can never be forgotten by the Christian—that the Incarnation, besides bringing blessings to man, brings glory to God. God manifest in the flesh is the great exhibition of the Divine perfections. And so thought the angels when they sang the first Christmas carol, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”

CHRISTMAS STARS.



ALM the morning starlight falleth on the snow,
Trembling in its joyaunce like the long-ago.
Clearly through the starlight, peal the Christmas bells,
While the heart’s deep throbbing, deeper longing tells.
Longing for heaven’s linking with the long-ago,
Brighter than the starlight—purer than the snow.
Glad beneath the starlight, sped life’s fairy years—
But above the starlight there are no more tears!

* * * * *

Ah, the day is over. Come the stars again,
Come to smile on gladness and to soothe old pain.

Welcome! ye are welcome, blessed Christmas stars!
Shed heaven’s hidden glory through time’s window-bars.
O'er life's pulsing billows gleam like Christ's own calm.
Rest is in your voices—in your silence, balm.
We have knelt together, as 'twas meet to kneel—
Poured the deep petition—swelled the anthem's peal.
Absent ones, death-parted, gathered round us there,
We were one that hour in the house of prayer.
Golden tresses mingled with the silver crown—
Youth and age together, reverently bowed down.
Knelt young men and maidens to receive the sign
Of that dear redemption, priceless and divine.

Rich and poor met yonder—met on Him to call
Who was born in Bethlehem—born to save us all.
Pealed the solemn organ o'er the parting throng—
Listened the old doorways to greetings glad and
long.
Home to Christmas gladness, festal cheer and light;

Love must hold high holiday—when if not to-night?
For HE giveth gladness—for HE knew our grief.
HE was born to save us—HE hath brought relief.
Take the boon HE bringeth! learn what HE hath
taught.
Joy sprang from His sorrows, joy surpassing thought.

A. BOND.

CHARLES COLVIN'S GIFTS.—I.

BY WILLIAM DUTHIE, AUTHOR OF "A TRAMP'S WALLET," ETC.

CHEN Charles Colvin left his native town—city, it would be only right to say, for it was Norwich—to make his fortune in London, he carried with him the good wishes of all his neighbours. These good wishes took the shape, in many cases, of solid gifts; and although some of these were uncommon enough, Charles welcomed them all, with a smile and a hearty word of thanks.

It was not that Charles Colvin stood in need of help. For a young man in his station of life he was fairly provided for. He was well clad and equipped, and carried some odd hundred pounds in his pocket. He was strong and well looking; and, more than all, had a firm will and a definite purpose.

As Charles stood upon the threshold of his father's house, his mother's hand in his own, Tom Parsons, the labourer's son, came rolling up to the door.

"Goin' to leave us, Master Charles," said Tom; "I heard of it, an' thought I'd like to say goodbye to you."

"Thank you, Tom," was the frank answer. "I shall not forget you."

"I'd like you to have something to remember me by, though," Tom continued, pulling a bulky article from his breast-pocket. "You would despise it, maybe?"

Tom held the proffered gift at half-arm's length, as if doubtful of its acceptance. It was certainly an uncommon souvenir: a bright tin bottle, such as workmen carry their tea in, and in which to warm it at some rude extemporeised fire.

"I despise no man's gifts," answered Charles with great earnestness, as he received the tin bottle with one hand, and extended the other to his humble friend. "Why, it is quite heavy, Tom," he added. "What is in it?"

"Ah! that's it!" answered Tom, a broad grin of triumph on his face. "You'd never guess, Master Charles. I'll tell you. I got it from the veterinary surgeon's. It's prime stuff for bruises and sprains. What they rub the horses with, you know. You bein' a saddler, Master Charles, I

thought it might be useful, even if you didn't rub it on yourself. You won't get such stuff in London, I know."

If a darker shade of thought passed through Charles Colvin's mind at these words, it found no expression in his face. He grasped Tom's hand with fervour, and thanked him cordially, if in few words.

Tom Parsons was scarcely out of sight when little Ted, the carrier's boy, came running up.

"Look here, Mr. Colvin!" cried Ted, out of breath with running; "look at what I've found."

"What is it?"

"A horseshoe."

"Well?"

"Won't you have it?" asked the little fellow, surprised and hesitating. "I've nothing else to give you."

"Thank you, Ted," answered Colvin, laughing. "But what should I do with it?"

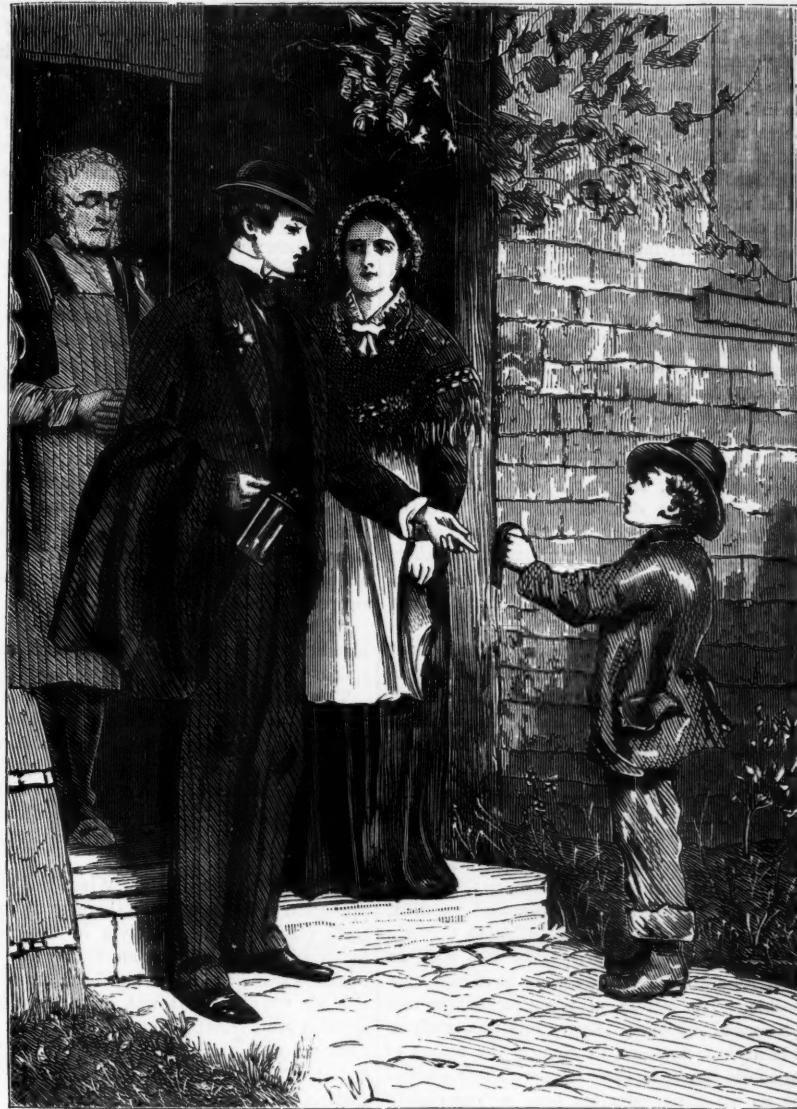
"It's lucky, you know."

"Ah! I forgot that. I'll take it, Ted, and thank you; if it's only in remembrance of you."

"Thank you," cried Ted, smiling joyfully. "I'll give it a wipe first. I picked it up in the road—that's what makes it lucky."

In a little while, Charles Colvin, with a touch of sorrow in the parting mingled with his flush of delightful anticipations at the future before him, had left father, mother, and friends, and was on his way westward towards the great city.

It was quite true that Charles Colvin was a saddler by trade. His father had been a saddler before him, and had brought up his son to follow in his footsteps—in matters of business at least. As for Charles himself, he had declared more than once that he hated the craft with all his heart, and never intended to live by it. Like a good son, however, he had bowed to the wish of his father, and on the attainment of his twenty-first year was an efficient member of his trade. Still he detested it; he despised it; he had left his home to fly from it, and to follow the bent of his own aspirations. Therefore it was that Tom Parsons's gift of a tin bottle filled with horse-oil had shocked his finer sensibilities. As for little Ted's horse-



(Drawn by F. W. LAWSON.)

"It's lucky, you know."—p. 216.

-night?
rief.
lief.
He hath
thought.
BOND.

dn't rub
London,
through
ound no
's hand
f in few
t when
up.
out of
found."

fellow,
else to
ughing.

ed, and
you."
"I'll
road—

ouch of
lush of
re him,
was on

was a
saddler
follow
t least
re than
heart,
nd son,
father,
t year
ill he
home
s own
erson's
knocked
horse-

shoe, the thing was simply ludicrous. But Charles, among his other sterling qualities, had a solid fund of good nature, and was sympathetic to the last degree. So he had accepted the two presents with something more than a good grace; supporting himself with the reflection that he should "despise no man's gifts." It was evident that the art of saddlery was a "gift," not included in the list.

It was a question whether Charles Colvin's dislike of his father's trade was not more a matter of sentiment than of reason. Although eminently practical and handy in all he touched, he had a strong element of poetry in his nature. There was a constant striving in him for the distant and the unseen. The things he stood among were all commonplace in his eyes, but beyond there must be a world of light and beauty. Colvin would never be a poet; he had tried that, and failed. He might possibly be a painter, he thought. He could draw fairly, and had a fine sense of the harmonies of colour. But in spite of his ideality, he was of all things practical; and no art or science lured him with such force as that of architecture. Yes, he would be an architect. There was a great deal of difference between architecture and saddlery, but that was not his fault. He loved the one, and contemned the other; and had come to London, to make his fortune among other things, but above all things to be an architect.

Colvin was not a mere visionary. He set about whatever he undertook with business-like method. He had a friend or two upon whom he could call for advice or information; he had letters of introduction to persons of standing in the profession of which he sought to become a member. Moreover, he had money in his pocket. As for the horse-oil and the horseshoe, he put them carefully out of sight.

Fortune is proverbially a coy goddess, and nowhere more so than in the great city, London, where she is supposed to be a constant resident, and is ever sedulously sought. Charles Colvin's search for her was in vain; yet he met with no especial rebuff. His friends were kind and ever accessible. His letters of recommendation met with a cordial response. Every one was ready to help him; but, by some ill chance, the means of doing so did not lie in their hands. There seemed to be no standing-room for him, so completely filled already was every post to which he was fitted—that is to say, always putting aside the saddlery. He was such a mere tyro in the simplest details of the profession he had chosen, that younger and more ignorant men than he appeared more eligible, and often stepped in before him. Still he was not discouraged. He studied assiduously at home, lived frugally, and

never relaxed in his search—not for Fortune just now, he had given her up for the present, but for the means of livelihood. For a little while Colvin attained to even that height. He took a junior's place, it is true, and received very low wages; but he could live upon his earnings, and this fact was to him an inexpressible gratification. He seemed to have steadied himself so far that he was, at least, not losing ground.

This happy state of things lasted for three months; then Colvin found himself stranded once more. It was time to review the situation. Should he go on, or must he fall back upon—saddlery? It must be confessed that Colvin's ideas concerning the art and mystery of a saddler had undergone some modification during his nine months' stay in London. It was not quite so despicable a craft as he had once held it to be. There were even some attractions in it. At any rate, it gave bread and cheese to those who followed it. Nevertheless, Charles Colvin was not beaten. He had left his home to become an architect, and an architect he would be, if he died for it.

There was some chance of even this latter part of his determination developing itself into a fact. If he had had to depend upon his actual earnings, Charles must have given up the ghost in a pitiable short space of time; but he had not yet exhausted his original resources, and he fell back upon this support once more.

"I will wait the year out," said Colvin to himself, "and then take stock, and see how I stand."

This was a hopeful resolution, nor was it without its reward. In a month's time he had obtained another junior's situation, and was busy at his desk, copying plans, writing out estimates, while once or twice he even rose to the dignity of an "elevation." There was no doubt Colvin was making real advances in the details of his chosen profession.

But Fortune was fickle. When the year of his probation came to an end, there were some hard facts staring Charles Colvin in the face. His juniorship had come to an end. The press of business was over, or he had been superseded by another "junior." It was quite certain he was without employment, and must fall back upon the remnant of his savings. "We are all 'juniors' together," muttered Colvin to himself. "I'm getting sick of it!"

Presently he found himself studying some records of emigration, and the times of sailing of fast "clipper" ships. He fancied he saw light over the waters. He put the case to himself in this way: "If I remain unemployed for a month, which is of all things probable, my last shilling will be gone. Now, I have just enough to carry me over the sea to America—Australia—Canada, with a few

pounds on landing in my pocket. Here, I may remain a 'junior' all my life; there, I may blossom into a full-grown 'senior.' I am stronger than I was. I really know something of my profession, and among new people could hold up my head without fear. If I remain here I may, in a month's time, have to beg my way back home, and turn to saddlery at last."

That very day Colvin took a berth on board the *Light of Day* for Adelaide. She was just about sailing, and Charles began packing his chest at once. Before long he came upon Tom Parsons's tin bottle, and little Ted's old horseshoe. His

first impulse was to toss them into a corner; his next to look at them and ponder. They seemed to appeal to him with recollections, some sorrowful, some tender, which brought the moisture into his eyes. The words he had uttered when he received them came back upon his tongue: "I despise no man's gifts;" and he added, unconsciously, aloud, "I trust I have never despised, and never shall abuse, God's gifts, or man's gifts either!" Without another word he packed the long-forgotten presents in his trunk, and within a few days was sailing over the blue waters to the new world.

(To be concluded.)

THE HYMNS OF ENGLAND.—III.

PERSONAL HYMNS.

HY "personal hymns," we mean those that were born out of the peculiar circumstances in which the authors were placed — hymns which may have been suitable to thousands in circumstances altogether dissimilar, and which are dear to us on this account, but more so in that they are biographical chapters, giving us glimpses into the personal history and inner lives of the authors, and connecting the men with the writings.

The soul of the Christian must utter its cry to God in distress, or raise its song in gladness. Special deliverances from evil, or special revelations of God in the midst of apparent evil, have been memorialised over and over again by our hymn-writers. The best hymns in our collections are those which have a history connected with their birth; and they are the best, because they have freshness and life and reality about them. Hymns written when in health about affliction in the abstract and the comfort of God therein, are not likely to have the force of those that have been written while the Divine consolations were being felt by the sufferer. Charles Wesley's hymns are incomparably better than those of Watts, not only in their construction, but in the warmth and reality of their expression. May not much of Wesley's success be attributable to the habit he had of always carrying in his pocket-book little cards, on which he was accustomed to write off the hymns when the subjects to be treated were warm and fresh in his thought? Many of his verses upon prayer and communion were jotted down a few minutes after he had left the prayer-meeting or the communion-table; and we have, therefore, as the result, not merely hymns upon prayer and communion, but the very spirit of the prayers that had been uttered, transcribed upon the page. Often would he get off his horse, throwing the reins loose to let the animal graze by the road-

side, while he sat upon a stone-heap or a stile, and record in verse the "experiences" through which his soul had passed in some little conventicle where he had been holding forth the Word of life. Wesley's biography is contained in his hymns; and when we consider that he wrote 7,000, we may believe that he has given us (although not always in poetry, not always in good taste, and not always in good English) a view of every phase of his religious history.

When Montgomery was old and seriously ill, he gave to his medical attendant and friend, Dr. Holland, his collection of hymns, in order that some might be read to him. He became so much affected at hearing them that the doctor would have discontinued, but Montgomery urged him to proceed, saying, "Read on; I am glad to hear you. The words recall the feelings which first suggested them; and it is good for me to feel affected and humbled by the terms in which I have endeavoured to provide for the expression of similar religious experience in others. As all my hymns embody some portion of the history of the joys or sorrows, the hopes and fears, of this poor heart, so I cannot doubt but that they will be found an acceptable vehicle of expression of the experience of many of my fellow-creatures who may be similarly exercised during the pilgrimage of their Christian life."

We propose to look at a few hymns which "embody some portions of the joys or sorrows, the hopes and fears," of the authors.

The prayer, "Thy will be done," is the shortest to say, but the prayer which takes the longest to learn. Perhaps it has rarely been offered up with a more perfect mind than it was by the saintly Baxter. He was sorely tried for conscience' sake, and was made to feel the purifying of the "refiner's fire." But trials never blotted out the smile on that face which, it was said, "hath a sweeter, more refined gravity, a calmer, holier ten-

derness of expression than, methinks, I e'er before observed in human, though I may have dreamed of such for spiritual, countenance." The persecutions to which he was exposed could not silence that voice, of which it was said, "They who would grow weary of it would grow weary of heaven itself." "Were I to live upon earth," says one, "for a thousand years, never should I forget this man's preaching, though the pen of an evangelist could alone fully describe its wonderful richness, fulness, and unction. Moreover, the argument of his sermon, likewise the application thereof, had a keenness and force which I compared to a sword of finest-tempered steel cutting its way through the pith of a knotty or difficult scriptural passage, the golden threads whereof others less gifted must seek unravel by a more tedious process, and thereby not unfrequently tangle them the more. Yet in Master Baxter's discourse, which I believe in a measure resembleth that the saints above hold with and hear from each other, there was so rare and happy a union of reason and persuasion, that, while he convinced the understanding, he failed not gain the heart. Yea, all its fountains were opened for him, able to look steadfastly into the profoundness of depths serene and transparent to his eye. His fervid earnestness became mingled with a certain noble negligence of style; for this great mind, surcharged with its subject, seemed as if it could no longer stoop to the mere eloquence of words, even when they were most piercing in their sweetness and divine in their power." It was when his energies were stretched to their uttermost in his great work, when the voice was rarely still and the eyes rarely closed, when he was feeling that the time for him to work was short, and waited with calm resignation the passing of the Act of Uniformity, and saw the dark clouds lowering around him, that he wrote the hymn—

"It's no great matter what men deem,
Whether they count me good or bad;
In their applause and best esteem
There's no contentment to be had."

There are many stanzas in the poem—too many to quote; but here are a few prophetic ones:—

"What if in prison I must dwell;
May I not there converse with Thee?
Save me from sin, Thy wrath, and hell;
Call me Thy child, and I am free.
"No walls or bars can keep Thee out;
None can confine a holy soul;
The streets of heaven it walks about,
None can its liberty control.
"This flesh hath drawn my soul to sin
If it must smart, Thy will be done!
O! fill me with Thy joys within,
And then I'll let it grieve alone."

It will be remembered that later in his life, on a charge of sedition and hostility to episcopacy, it was Baxter's misfortune to fall a victim to the tyranny of Judge Jeffreys, who sentenced him to

a fine of 500 marks, to lie in prison until it was paid, and to be bound to his good behaviour for seven years, and "was sorry that the Act of Indemnity disabled him from hanging him."

What a history lies in that hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way!"—a history which is as instructive as the hymn itself. The cloud was over the heart and brain of Cowper, and his disease was of the worst kind of mental disorder. Not mad, not sane; responsible and irresponsible almost at one and the same time. Blank, utter insanity, and then an interval of awful sanity, waking up to the understanding of melancholy and sadness—the recovery worse than the disease. It was while he was in this state that he became possessed with the dreadful thought that he would be fulfilling the decree of Providence by committing suicide. He fixed upon the spot in the river Ouse where he would drown himself, and, with a settled purpose, he started off to the commission of the fatal act. He obtained the services of a coachman who knew the locality well to drive him to the place, and, with his mind intent on his destination, he took no thought of the way thither. By some strange means—and yet not strange when we think of Him who in His providence "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"—the driver, although well acquainted with the neighbourhood, mistook the road, and completely lost his way. A long time was spent in trying to reach the spot, but without success; and Cowper returned home. Then the awful fascination that had held him spell-bound departed—"the devil came out of him," and he wrote that wonderful hymn which has expressed the trust of thousands of God's children in the midst of dark dispensations of Providence:—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

It was in another of the intervals of his fits of melancholy, when he had got free for a little space from "scrambling always among rocks and precipices, with the enemy at his heels eager to push him over headlong," that he wrote the hymn—

"Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!
"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?
"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But now I find an aching void
The world can never fill."

Cowper's hymns have a charm and a fascination which we feel for few others; and it is because the memories of the man are associated with so many

of his verses. One loves to turn again and again when we tell,

"through dimming tears his story,

How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory,"

to Mrs. Browning's exquisite poem on "Cowper's

Grave," in which she makes this grand appeal:—

"O poets! from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing.

O Christians! at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was clinging.

O men! this man in brotherhood, your weary paths beguiling, groaned only while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling."

Cowper and Newton are always associated in name, although no one ever dreams of associating the men together.

Newton has left us many personal hymns, which give glimpses of that strange life which is a study more instructive than any learned theological work; a life which teaches us that religion is not a thing of mere dogma, but a practical, transforming power, which can turn the lion into the lamb, and the sinner into the saint. His was a life full of wild incident and adventure: now living under an African sun doing the meanest drudgery; now engaged in the slave-trade; now a castaway. He was a reckless profligate and a daring blasphemer, to whom the Bible was but a text-book for ribaldry. It is well to let bygones be bygones sometimes in a man's life, but not always; for how greatly does the recollection of a career like Newton's magnify the grace of God? Think of him as the blasphemer whom even blasphemers could not tolerate, and then think of him as writing that hymn:—

"Precious Bible! what a treasure
Does the Word of God afford!
All I want for life or pleasure,
Food and medicine, shield and sword:
Let the world account me poor,
Having this I need no more."

It was when he was on the seas that he was stopped in his headlong course to ruin. There was before him speedy death in the raging billows, or a lingering death on the drifting wreck. In the midst of the storm, his cry went up to God out of the depths; and the cry was heard and answered. With the recollection of this circumstance, how interesting is that poem—

"I hear the tempest's awful sound,
I feel the vessel's quick rebound,
And fear might now my bosom fill,
But Jesus tells me, 'Peace! Be still!'"

Another hymn, which is known everywhere, is a very characteristic one, and, like most of Newton's, is biographical.

"Begone, unbelief,
My Saviour is near,
And for my relief
Will surely appear:
By prayer let me wrestle,
And He will perform;
With Christ in the vessel,
I smile at the storm."

There is one very personal hymn in Watts's col-

lection with which a singular story is connected. There was an accomplished and beautiful lady, Miss Elizabeth Singer, who was admired wherever she went, and received the addresses of some of the leading men of the time. It was facetiously said that a popular hymn-writer ought to marry a good "Singer;" and Isaac Watts seemed to agree with that statement, for he formed a strong attachment to the lady.

He was not remarkable for the elegance of his personal appearance; but perhaps this was a matter of no moment to him as he wrote in one of his songs—

"The mind's the stature of the man."

But it was a matter of great importance to Miss Singer; and when she received from him an offer of marriage, she gave a point-blank refusal, and declared that "though she loved the jewel, she could not admire the casket that contained it." It was a hard blow for poor Watts, and it may be that he never loved again; at all events, he lived and died a bachelor. There is something which involuntarily makes one smile when reading the hymn which memorialises this incident in his life. There are fine sentiments in the hymn, a devout resignation to the decrees of Providence, and an exquisite prayer in the last verse, and yet—

But here are a few lines of the hymn:—

"How vain are all things here below!
How false, and yet how fair!
Each pleasure hath its poison too;
And ev'ry sweet a snare.
"Dear Saviour! let Thy beauties be
My soul's eternal food;
And grace command my heart away
From all created good."

John Wesley did not write many hymns; his vocation seemed rather to be to alter what others had written. But there is one of his which is well known, commencing—

"How happy is the pilgrim's lot."

It was written when he was a bachelor, and contained this verse:—

"I have no share of my heart
To rob my Saviour of a part,
And desecrate the whole;
Only betrothed to Christ am I,
And wait His coming from the sky
To wed my happy soul."

We do not for a moment agree with the sentiment of the stanza; but it would have been well for Wesley if he had agreed with it himself more completely than he did, and had continued a bachelor.

What a pity that anything like a disputation should ever have taken place between such good men as Wesley and Toplady. But they could not see alike on a question of doctrine; and the mistake, so prevalent now, that a warfare of words is the best way to convince of truth, was made by both of them. Toplady could not tolerate what he

it was
aviour
Act of
moves
is as
s over
so was
t mad,
host at
y, and
to the
s—the
ile he
d with
filling
icide.
ere he
pose,
al act.
knew
e, and
e took
strange
of Him
s after
ough
istook
long
ot, but
home.
d him
out of
which
God's
ons of
fits of
space
preci-
push
nation
the
many

conceived to be the teaching of Wesley, that it is possible for a believer in the Lord Jesus to attain even in this life to absolute perfection. But the controversy brought forth that glorious hymn which has been the prayer of millions, which was the death-song of our good Prince Albert, and which, if only the histories connected with it could be gathered together, would make one of the grandest records of the power of Christian verse—

“Rock of ages, cleft for me!
Let me hide myself in Thee!” &c.

The title that Toplady gave to the hymn was, “A living and dying prayer for the holiest believer in the world;” and herein may be observed a sly hint to those who believe in absolute perfection that such a prayer should be breathed by them; but, if perfect, whence the need of such a prayer?

A hymn almost as well known as “Rock of ages,” is “Come, Thou fount of every blessing.” It was written by Robert Robinson in his early and best days. He was but a lad when he strolled one Sunday into the Tabernacle to hear Whitefield preach. He was startled and arrested, and determined then and there to give his life to God. Gifted with extraordinary talents, he entered upon the ministry, and in the Tabernacle moved his audience to enthusiasm with his powerful preaching.

But, unstable as water, and as a wave of the sea driven of the wind and tossed, he went from one thing to another—now turning Calvinistic Methodist, now Independent, now Baptist, until at last he became an avowed Socinian. No man can be brought into contact with his former self without emotion. We cannot recall the memories of a love which we have lost, or of hopes which were once the strength of our life but have passed away, without feeling the undying influence of impressions which have been made upon our hearts. It was so with Robinson. In the darkness which encompassed him, sometimes a ray of the light of former years would fall across his path, and then would flash upon him the “blessedness he knew when first he saw the Lord.” One day he was travelling by coach, when a lady, a stranger, who had been reading his hymn, “Come, Thou fount of every blessing,” turned to him, asking if he knew it, and telling him of the comfort and happiness it had been to her. He tried to parry her question, but she returned to it again and again, until at last, bursting into a flood of tears, he exclaimed, passionately, “Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who composed that hymn many years ago; and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then!”

ALLHALLOWS EVE.

“Hemp seed I throw thee; hemp seed I sow thee;
Whoever’s my true love come after and now thee.”

SILLY little Essie, of only ten years, had repeated her lines of incantation several times, but as yet without any shadow of the expected result.

For little madcap Essie’s head was filled with all such legendary lore as had given rise to this latest freak of hers. She had heard it said that if she went at midnight, on Allhallows Eve, to the church porch, and repeated the words you have already seen, and waited till somebody came by, he would, as surely as fate, be her true love.

So the foolish child had stolen out of her warm bed, and crept across the garden into the churchyard.

The words grew fainter, and the poor shivering little lassie was half crying. She was fast losing her little stock of courage; the churchyard was so dreadfully quiet, and the graves cast such dismal shadows. Now she sat down on the porch seat, and hugged herself to keep the little warmth she possessed in her half-frozen body. You wonder why she did not go back to her own little bed again. The truth was that she was too frightened to walk through the churchyard again; so she sat in the porch, waiting for she knew not what.

A little heap of snow that had remained unmelted

from the fall of the previous day was glittering in the rays of moonlight, and as Essie’s eyes followed the track of light, and at length rested upon the mountlet, she fancied she saw the white flakes moving. Yes, they certainly were, for in a few moments the white heap parted, and there emerged from the depths a little creature not less beautiful than the feathery snowflakes in which she dwelt. Such a pale little beauty she was, with hair whose colour must have been stolen from the golden lining of a cloud. Feathery snowflakes sparkled all over her dress, and her wand was a blade of tender young grass, jewelled with snow. Essie watched the beautiful little creature coming up to her. A witching little voice was saying, “Essie.”

Essie was too surprised to answer, and the little voice said again, “Essie, my little girl, what are you doing here?”

Essie was still silent, for she was too ashamed of herself to answer her visitor’s question.

“Essie, dear,” the little lady continued, “I think you must be a very foolish little girl to sit here in the cold for nothing.”

“I didn’t come here for nothing,” said Essie, finding courage to speak, from the idea that the fairy could not know her real reason for coming.

"It was worse than nothing, my dear," said the fairy. "If your head had not been filled with naughty notions, you would never have come here to-night. I have known and watched you ever since your birth, little Essie, and am sorry to say that you have grown into a silly, vain, and even wicked little girl."

"I am not wicked," said Essie, angrily.

"Suppose you die to-night, out in the cold, do you think God would send his angels to take you to him?"

"But I am not going to die, am I?" asked Essie, quickly.

"I cannot tell you," answered the fairy.

"Then why did you frighten me so? 'Tis you who are wicked. How do you know that I am wicked? Because you found me in the churchyard?" asked Essie, growing bold.

"It was not because I found you here that I know you are wicked," answered the fairy. "Who was it told a story to her papa yesterday, and took her brother's toys away and hid them the other day, and—"

"Oh, please stop!" cried out Essie, as she remembered how many of the like accusations the fairy could bring against her.

"As long as you remember them, that will do," replied the fairy. "But what a pity it is that, instead of being a comfort and blessing to your papa, mamma, and all your friends, you should worry your kind parents till they hardly know what to do with you, besides being disliked by all your playmates and companions. Why don't you try and make yourself loved by everybody by being kind and thoughtful to others?"

"How can I?" asked Essie.

"How does Janey White make people love her?"

"Oh, Janey is ill, and always in bed. She can't play about, so she doesn't want to tease her brother, and she can't be tired, for she never gets up; so I don't see why she should be cross or ill-tempered."

"I think she has every reason to be cross; if she were not a good little girl. She has a great deal of pain to bear, and can never amuse herself in any way, poor child!"

"Well, how can I be good and useful?" said Essie, disconsolately.

"It is not very easy to tell you, my dear," answered the fairy, "but if you would like to come with me, instead of staying here by yourself all night, perhaps I may be able to show you the way to be in some measure useful to others, not by great deeds, but by little acts of kindness and consideration."

"But when shall we be back?" asked Essie, half inclined to doubt the fairy's sincerity.

"Oh, by to-morrow morning. I will leave you in your own bed as I pass by your papa's house."

"Oh, thank you; then I shall like to come, very much," said Essie.

No sooner had she said so than she felt herself moving rapidly along. She seemed to be travelling on air, for her feet never came in contact with any substance, nor did she feel the slightest fatigue, although they had long ago left behind every house and tree which she had seen before. As they journeyed on, they passed many beautiful houses, where lights were shining, but at none of these did the fairy stay; they were left behind, and Essie saw that smaller and meaner ones took their place, till at length they came to some on a moor, so poor and small as to be hardly habitable. Into one of these the fairy and Essie entered, and found a dying woman lying on a miserable bed.

"Do you see that poor creature, Essie?" asked the fairy.

"Hush!" said Essie; "you will wake her, will you not?"

"I am glad to see you are beginning to be considerate, but in this case it is not needed, for she could not hear our voices if she were wide awake."

"How is that?" asked Essie.

"We are invisible," answered the fairy, "and our voices can only be heard by ourselves. See, the poor woman is opening her eyes: she was not asleep."

"How dreadfully hot she looks," said Essie, compassionately.

"Yes, she has the fever; and in this out-of-the-way place the houses have no water, nor is there any one who will risk infection to bring her some."

At the word "infection" Essie's selfish fears began to arise. "Oh, I shall catch the fever!" she exclaimed, shrinking away from the bedside.

The fairy looked severely at her. "Are you still so selfish?" she asked. "You may go out, if you like, but you will never find your way home, and you are nearly sure to die of cold."

"Oh! what shall I do?" cried Essie, in an agony of fright.

"You know who can keep you from all harm," said the fairy.

"Yes," answered Essie; and for the first time in her life, perhaps, she really prayed.

Essie was watching the fairy's proceedings with the keenest interest. First she sprinkled the poor woman's pillow with the tiniest snowflakes, and then, having dropped some larger ones on the sick woman's lips and about her face, they prepared to leave. The relief the woman felt was apparent, for she laid her hot cheek against the cool pillow, and closed her eyes with an expression of comfort that was gratifying to the kind fairy's heart.

"I don't see that that was much to do," said Essie, when they were once more out in the open air.

"It was very, very little," said the fairy, sadly; "but I have only the power to do little, and I must be content to make the best use I can of the power that has been given me."

"It is hardly worth while to have come all this way for such a little thing."

"Every act of kindness, however small, is worth the trouble if it brings happiness to some poor sufferer."

The next place they stopped at was in the midst of a large town. A mother was pacing up and down the dark room, in the vain endeavour to hush a sickly child.

"Poor little thing!" whispered the fairy, "she has never been well since she was born."

"What can you do here?" asked Essie, wonderingly.

"Not much," answered the fairy, as she dropped a snowflake in the child's palm.

The child left off crying, to admire the pretty plaything that lay glittering in her hand. Now that she had left off crying, the mother's coaxing had more effect; and before they left, Essie and the fairy had the satisfaction of seeing the baby asleep in its little cradle, and the mother resting from her weary vigil.

"Poor thing! she looked quite worn out. I am glad the baby went to sleep," said Essie, who was beginning to experience the pleasure of making others happy.

"Yes, so am I," replied the fairy; "she needed it, for she had been up nearly all night for several weeks."

"Poor woman! but why did you not go to her before?" asked Essie.

"I could not—I had to go elsewhere; for there are many thousands of God's creatures who need my assistance even more than she."

By this time they had come to a cottage, on the window-sill of which was a flower-pot containing a stunted flower. At this the fairy stopped, and heaped up the flower-pot with snow from her wand till the flower was no longer visible.

"What is that for?" asked Essie, wonderingly.

"In the cottage lives a little invalid, who has only this flower to cherish," answered the fairy; "and if I did not cover it over with snow every cold night, it would soon die, for you know the snow keeps it warm."

"But is it worth while for you to spend your valuable time over that little withered flower?" asked Essie.

"Quite," replied the fairy; "it is the only thing the little fellow has, and he would miss it very much if it were to die."

Presently they came to another cottage, into which they entered. A little girl was sitting up in bed, and stretching out her hand for the cup of water that her mother had placed on the chair at her bedside; but a look of distress came over the poor child's pinched features. Her mother had forgotten to put any water in the cup.

The fairy filled a little mug with melted snow-flakes, and put it in the place of the cup. Then

she whispered to the little girl, "It is in the cup."

The child stretched out her hand and took the mug, and having tasted the water, she laid down refreshed, and was soon asleep.

"Why, it is Janey White," said Essie, recognising a little girl who lived in the same village as her own parents.

"Yes, it is," replied the fairy. "And now I shall leave you, hoping you may derive some benefit from this night's adventures."

"But I am not at home yet," said Essie, anxiously.

"Yes, you are," said a voice that Essie knew; and to her entire bewilderment, she found herself in her own bed, with her mamma bending over her.

Then Essie heard how she had been found asleep, and nearly frozen, by a labourer who had come through the churchyard on his way to his work, and had been brought home to her parents.

Essie never could quite understand that night's adventures; but that they made a lasting impression upon her, was very certain. Although she never told any one of her acquaintance with the fairy, it was evident to all that she was trying to make herself more lovely and lovable, and that the lesson of the "little deeds that make up the sum of human happiness" was slowly but surely being learnt by the once unamiable Essie.

L. M. C.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

110. What is the meaning of "Jehovah-shammah?"
111. The Lord once asked a man if he sought great things for himself, and told him not to do so. Who was it?

112. How many men were sent to take up Jeremiah from the dungeon?

113. The water trickles into the Pool of Siloam so softly that it cannot be heard. Travellers have remarked this. What scripture does this confirm?

114. Certain postmen who were mocked and jeered at when they delivered their news.

115. Why was it that the Syrian charioteers left from following after Jehoshaphat at the battle of Ramoth-gilead?

116. At what part of the dedication service was it that the cloud filled the Temple?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 192.

96. Trophimus (Acts xxi. 26).
97. 1 Chron. iv. 23.
98. 1 Chron. xxvii. 33.
99. Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 21).
100. 2 Chron. xxv. 12.
101. Ezek. xl. 11, 12.
102. Ezek. xlvi. 12.
103. Ezek. xl. 1.
104. Joseph (Gen. 1. 17).